The Beautiful Ones

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The Beautiful Ones

by Ash9tray

Summary

Will Graham has always been alone. For all 16 years of his life, he has never met anyone like him. That is until he is forcibly admitted into a mental institution for troubled young men and he meets a peculiar Lithuanian boy.

A different first meeting AU inspired by "Girl Interrupted", where Hannibal and Will meet at a mental institution in the 60's.

Title from Prince's song "The Beautiful Ones"

Notes

A few things before we get started! In this AU I've closed their age gap by a huge amount. So Will is 16 and Hannibal is 17. Because it wouldn't have worked if I hadn't. Also, this takes place during the 1960's, I felt it would fit the theme better :). Please excuse any errors I make for this is not beta read, and I usually write during the early hours of the morning.

See the end of the work for more notes

Happy Birthday

“Snow.

It has a way of hiding things.

Everything seems pure, covered in a layer of white.

Until you dig underneath and find the gray, ugly truth.”

— Birgitte Märgen, The Puritan

Will was running.

“ *Will—WILL!* This is for your own good son!” His fathers voice echoed throughout the dark forest, small pinpricks of light reflected off of Will's hair as he fled. Branches scraped and scratched at his forearms and legs, but he kept running. He couldn’t let them win.

He stumbled forward, startled by the soft heat of a flashlight shining on his face. He was momentarily blinded from the ray, and he frantically reached his hands out, finding the bark of a nearby tree by scraping his palm. He continued to feel for a way, twisting and turning around the pine that seemed to get coarser as he moved further into the forest. He suddenly stopped, breathing deeply, and looked about as the thick moonlight pierced through the branches.

A stag, almost black in the moonlight stared at him and huffed softly. Will stood and stared back at it, forgetting his current predicament to bask in the beauty of this creature, clad in what almost looked to be a feather coat. He stepped forward, his fingers spread, and the stag looked at him with large eyes, shimmering with pride and power, practically begging for him to *feel* .

This moment of wonder was cut short as the heavy force of a police officer tackling Will to the ground forced the air out of his lungs.

Shit.

His knees scraped against the cold December ground and he felt cold handcuffs being placed around his wrists. Tears threatened to stream down his face as he lifted his head, searching for his stag.

It was nowhere to be seen, gone as if it had never existed in the first place. He was alone. *Again.*

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The Beautiful Ones

"You are 15, is that correct?" A man with square aviator glasses sat across from Will, with a clipboard clutched neatly in his hands.

"16." Will corrected him and shifted uncomfortably in his seat, the metal chair not doing his now police injured back any justice. His wrists still burned from the handcuffs being placed on him too tight.

The man flipped papers, checked his birthdate and scratched something down with a pen. "Ah I see. Happy birthday."

Will swallowed and allowed him a small smile. "some fuckin' birthday."

The man gave him a tight expression, maybe one that was supposed to be feigning sympathy. "I hear you were a hard one to catch. Tell me, have you heard of the Baltimore State Hospital?"

Will's brow furrowed and he leaned forward nervously in his chair. "The place for the insane? Yeah I've heard of it."

"Well" The man started and cleared his throat. "They recently opened a ward for troubled adolescents like yourself. Your father and I think it would be beneficial for you if-"

" *No.* " Will interrupted him and shook his head. "I'm *not* going there. No. I don't want to be- I'm not insane!"

The man palmed a pen and twisted it in his hands. "I'm not calling you insane, Will. I don't think you are. I think you're troubled. And this'll help you. Their new program is proven to have great results, Doctor Chilton is well respected. It's a privilege to be given a room there."

"Some privilege." Will huffed and folded his arms. "I'm not going."

The man eyed him from under his glasses and pushed them forward on his nose. "I'm sorry Will, but this isn't exactly your choice. They need only a parent signature" He removed a contract looking paper from his clipboard and slid it in front of Will.

Will recognized his Father's signature and frowned. He placed his finger over the writing and smudged the ink. It hadn't been signed for long. "Do you think it really is my fault that I'm troubled when my own father sends me to some sort of teen psych ward on my birthday?"

The man ignored his question and stood. "There's a cab waiting for you outside with all of your things packed."

Will's frown grew. "My dad isn't driving me over?"

"I'm afraid not. Makes it easier for him and you to transfer into the program. He's already left."

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The Beautiful Ones

The hour-long cab ride gave Will time to think. Think about what went wrong, how he could flee more effectively next time- (if there was a next time.) Think about how much he hated his bastard father and if this meant he didn't have to see his sorry face again-

He told himself to stop. He loved his father, but he wasn't sure if his father loved him. He knew that he somewhat blamed Will, the way he was could have been the primary reason for his mother leaving. He also simply couldn't understand him, why he would sit in the corner of his room and shut his eyes tightly when things got too overwhelming. It didn't help that his empathy was so strong that he cried the few times his father even tried to bond.

Deer huntin' was something they could have had together, though the one and only hunting trip they took together ended with Will in tears because he could 'feel it's pain.'

"This is food!" His father tried reassuring him, placing his hand on the dead back of the deer.

Will frowned and wiped away his tears, and he remembers thinking how stupid this all was, how he'd rather fish. Fishing felt more humane. *Luring* as opposed to *Hunting.* His dad had other ideas, wanting to make Will a man.

He put the knife into Will's hand and guided his arm towards the belly of the animal, motioning him to slice it open.

"What did you do?"

Will blinked. "Huh?" He was back in the cab, rain began to pour on the windows and the soft patter of water against glass threatened to put him to sleep again.

"Well, we are currently on the way to Baltimore State n' I don know…"

"I'm not insane, that's for sure." Will palmed his jacket and his fingers found a piece of gum. He unwrapped the stale thing and popped it into his mouth. "Dad says I feel too much."

"That doesn' sound too bad" The cab driver tapped his fingers against the steering wheel. "My wife thinks I should do that more. *More Empathetic* I think is what she said" A cigarette hung from his mouth and he took a long drag, blowing smoke out the window, the cab momentarily transforming into an overnight train. "Feelin' is fairy shit."

Will tried to ignore the fact that the man had practically called him *a fairy* and he pressed his cheek against the cold glass, the light tune of *happy birthday* singing its way into his skull.

The next time he woke the cab had stopped and they were outside of a large building. A man stood at the front with a dark, cherry colored cane tucked neatly between his fingers.

“Good luck, kid” The driver tipped his hat.

Will huffed in thanks and exited the car, his suitcase of things trailing behind him. He raised his head to look at the building, which of course looked exactly like it did in the newspapers.

The smell of electricity entered Will's nostrils and he gagged.

“You must be Mr. Graham!” The man with the cane extended his hand and Will shook it hesitantly. “I’m Doctor Frederick Chilton. I’m in charge of this fine establishment that you see in front of you.”

“It sure is an establishment.” Will feigned a smile and brushed bangs away from his eyes.

Dr. Chilton didn’t seem to take notice that this wasn’t necessarily a compliment. “It sure is. Why don’t I show you around?”

He turned to enter the building and Will stood still. A hard press of a hand on his back made sure that he followed, and he looked to see two orderlies behind him. *God,* he hated this already.

The inside of the building was worse than the outside, sterile hospital walls covered the entire first floor and the smell of electric-burned flesh seemed to grow and sizzle whatever nostril hair Will had left.

“Excuse this hall, this is the adult ward.” Chilton sniffed and his cane made a soft tapping noise against the tile as he moved about the hospital. He stopped abruptly in front of an elevator, unlocking the cage with a copper key. He gestured for Will to enter and he did, Chilton following with one orderly.

“You Mr. Graham, will be staying on the bottom floor.” He closed the cage and lifted his cane, pressing *floor 0.* “This used to be our storage but an anonymous donor made it all possible.” The elevator creaked and shook, sounding like it would break any moment now, sending them all crashing down to the depths of the hospital.

To Will’s dismay, the elevator did not break, with the doors eventually opening, revealing a nearly identical layout to the floors previous. They walked across the hall, but they were stopped by a boy with wide eyes and an even wider smile.

"Hellooooo Handsome!" He growled and moved aside, obviously eyeing Will up and down. Will was noticeably unnerved and he kept his hands at his side.

"That's Matthew Brown." Chilton cleared his throat.

"Oh I do hope your room is close to mine." Matthew giggled "I would prefer roomies but I already have a roommate. Ugh." He groaned and then his eyes shifted towards Doctor Chilton. "Unlesssss??"

Chilton shook his head. "No Matthew. I am not switching so you can room with Mr. Graham, he's already assigned a roommate."

Matthew kicked his feet and shuffled away. Before turning the corner he yelled *"Who is he rooming with? Maybe I can ask to swi-"*

"No Matthew! For the last time, We are not switching you! I think a hot bath is in order for you young man!" Chilton sighed and pressed his fingers to his temple. "On that note, I think we should show you to your room."

Will nodded and nervously walked behind the Doctor. All these boys were overwhelming. His experience with his peers, people his age, had not been good. He had been thoroughly kicked around in public school, so much so that he had practically begged his father to be able to study at home.

Chilton knocked on a white door twice then opened it. "Good afternoon, Hannibal. I have your new roommate with me."

Will peered inside the room from behind Chilton and noticed a notably Handsome boy sat on a bed in front of him. His eyes were dark, hair was slicked back, and he held out a hand with long fingers for him to shake. "Hannibal Lecter."

Will stared for a moment then his cheeks flushed a light pink when he realized he had been looking for too long. He took Hannibal's hand, admiring the gentle but strong grip.

"I-uh. Will Graham." Will stammered, choking on his spit slightly. Hannibal radiated grace, so much so that it nearly made Will's stomach flip over.

Hannibal's eyes flickered and met Will's, his lips curling up to reveal small vampire-like fangs. "Pleased to meet you, Will." Hannibal's accent dripped off of his tongue like honey, saying Will's name out loud like it had been the words to a sacred prayer, gripping Will's heart and crushing it into pieces.

Chilton coughed. "I'll leave you two to it. Hannibal I can trust you to tell Will the rules of this place, yes?"

Hannibal nodded, answering Chilton without breaking eye contact. "Yes I can."

Chilton stood for a moment, observing the both of them still gripping hands, and he slowly walked backwards and shut the door.

Will was the first to break eye contact from Hannibal and he removed his hand from his grasp. He surveyed the room, eyeing papers strewn about an oak desk and he placed a hand over them, delicately brushing away pencil shavings.

At first, they looked to be photographs of places and people, but something was peculiar about them that made Will instantly recognize them as drawings.

"Did you do these?"

Hannibal raised his head and smiled, his cheekbones creating pleasing shadows on his face. "Yes."

"They are beautiful" Will gingerly picked up one, taking note that this one was an almost photographic copy of the front of the hospital. "Looks just like it"

"Thank you." Hannibal replied almost sweetly, and Will noticed that he had not even looked at the specific drawings that he had been holding but only at him.

Will's eyes shifted back to the drawings and he picked up another one. This one was of a deer antler, though the highlights had been detailed so well that it looked to almost *sparkle* . "I think this one is my favorite."

"You can have it, then" Hannibal replied.

" *Really* ?" Will asked, straining to not let the excitement creeping into his voice betray him. He turned and nearly fell into Hannibal, confusion settling in his body as he had crossed the room without making any noise, like a bobcat during the hunt.

"Of course." Hannibal reached over Will and pressed his hands into the paper. "These have no value to me. I just do it to pass the time. You can have any you like."

"Th-ank y-o-u" Will stammered, his hands still gripping the drawing. Hannibal had been so close that they were almost chest to chest.

"I have one condition however!" Hannibal started and turned, moving away from Will and Will practically fainted with relief. "You sit for me. Let me draw you"

Will swallowed and smiled. "Deal."

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The Beautiful Ones

Hannibal and Will sat across from each other on the floor of their room.

“There are three rules to this place, follow them and you should be fine.” Hannibal flipped back pages in his sketchbook, smoothing his hand over a new clean page. “Rule one: Cheek your pills.”

Will’s brow furrowed and he scratched his head in confusion. “That doesn’t sound like a rule that Doctor Chilton would tell you”

Hannibal smirked. “Clever boy. That’s because it’s not. Doctor Chilton told me to tell you the rules, that is correct however, He didn’t specify which ones I should tell you. I’m telling you ones that will help you in the long run.” His red-brown eyes dilated as his (mandatorily dull) pencil began to scratch the paper. “Rule two: Don’t make friends.”

Will frowned. “Well *I-”*

“Save for me of course. We can be friends, you’ve found me interesting enough to prove that.” Hannibal clicked his tongue.

“I don’t find you *that* interesting.” Will lied and chewed the inside of his cheek. He figured he had begun to show obvious signs of being attached to someone too quickly. It was a habit he had procured since childhood, and it never served him well (The evidence of that being the fact that he had *zero* friends.)

“You will.” Hannibal grinned and continued. “Last rule: Don’t talk to Matthew”

Will laughed. “I know that rule already. He tried to flirt with me the minute I walked in. Smiled bigger than goddamn Joker.”

Hannibal gave him an incredulous look. “I beg your pardon?”

“Joker. Like the villain Joker. Don’t tell me you don’t know who Joker is!”

When Hannibal didn’t give any looks of recognition Will gasped with overexaggerated shock. “Holy shit. I’ve got to get you a comic book. Or three.”

"I'd like that." Hannibal breathed softly and his eyes fluttered to Will's. “I think we will make great friends, you and I.” They both quieted and stared at each other for a moment, the silence only being broken by Hannibal’s pencil scratching paper.

“Where are you from?” Will stammered, breaking eye contact and feeling the beginnings of sweat droplets making their way down his forehead. “I mean-sorry if that was blunt or rude. I just noticed your accent. I’ve never heard one quite like it.”

“No it’s alright to ask Will. I’m from Lithuania.” Hannibal’s forehead creased. Will knew then that this subject bothered him. “Though I’ve been here for a little while with my Aunt and Uncle.” He tapped his pencil a couple of times before looking at Will, changing the focus. "Where are you from?"

"Louisiana."

Hannibal’s eyes lit up. “Ah. I should have known. You have quite the accent as well.”

Will frowned. “Oh. I try my best to hide it”

“Why?”

“It’s ugly.”

Hannibal finished drawing and set his book down. “It is anything but ugly.”

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The Beautiful Ones

Hannibal and Will walked the white hospital halls. The faint smell of melancholy whisked through the air, making its way through Will’s brunette curls.

A bell rang, slicing the quietness of the hallway in half. Boys exited their rooms and stood in a line, all timid looking and all baring that same half empty look that Will noticed was common around here. A nurse stood at the front with a clipboard and a cart of paper cups.

“Hannibal Lecter.” The nurse called, marking the board.

Hannibal walked to the front of the line and waited for her to hand him a paper cup. He downed the contents of the cup and followed it with water.

“Tongue”

Hannibal smiled and opened his mouth, showing the nurse that he had ‘swallowed’ the pills. The nurse nodded and sent him back to his room. Hannibal walked past Will on the way, winking and spitting out the pills as gracefully as one can into his hand.

“Will Graham.”

Will walked up nervously to the nurse, shaking slightly as he took the cup with sweaty hands. He moved the pills under the back of his tongue and blinked, taking the water and swallowing it.

“Tongue”

Will frowned, opened his mouth and when the nurse nodded that he was free to go, a wave of relief moved down his body. He didn’t know what the punishment was for not taking your pills, or what pills they were even giving him for that matter, but he didn’t want to know. Hannibal had been more trustworthy than any of these adults.

“Psst.”

Will looked to his left, then right, and noticed a boy with short brown hair beckoning him over. Will reluctantly moved towards the boy and raised his eyebrows.

“You’re the one who’s rooming with Hannibal now right?” The boy asked.

“Yeah.”

“Be careful. He’s gone through the most roommates out of all of us. Almost all of them had to be taken to the pillow room at one point or another.” The boy pat his shoulder and gripped it lightly.

“The *what* room? He seems nice enough to me.” Will’s frown grew. “Who even are you?”

“Brian Zeller. The *pillow room* is what we call room 101. That’s where they take you if you are suspected of hurting anyone or yourself. Or if you already have.”

Will licked his lips. “And you think..-”

“That *Hannibal* is the one who caused them to harm themselves? *Or others?* Yes. Yes I do.” Brian looked at Hannibal’s door and hummed nervously. “ *Every. Single. Roommate.* Every single roommate that he’s had has been there. It’s only a matter of time before yo-“

“F-Fuck off.” Will stammered and pushed Brian away. “He’s not like that.”

“Whatever you say man.” Brian rubbed his shoulder. “Just don’t come cryin’ back to me when it turns out he’s *not* what you think he is.”

Will made his way back to their room confused. What was that? Hannibal seemed to be the most *normal* one there yet Brian looked to be nearly pissing himself when he just *looked* at his door.

He walked in and Hannibal looked at him expectantly. Will spat out the pills into his hand, a string of salvia embarrassingly sticking to his chin.

“Good boy.” Hannibal took the slick pills, lifted a part of his bedpost, and placed the meds into a small groove, twisting the post back on.

"Why do you do that?" Will sniffed. "And I'm not a dog."

"Convenience. I didn't say that you were one."

Will gave him an incredulous look, a *knowing* look and Hannibal huffed. "I'm not suicidal, Will. That's not why I'm here."

Four Times

Chapter Summary

Will smiled fondly as he looked at the graphite, how Hannibal had drawn his curls to look soft as opposed to the reality of the scraggly mop that was currently attached to Will's skull.

He turned the page and there was another of him.

And another.

… and another.

Hannibal had drawn him four times in the span of less than 24 hours.

Chapter Notes

TW: some references to suicidal thoughts. (1 word.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Why is Hannibal Lecter admitted here?"

Will lay across the couch of Doctor Chilton's office. He crossed his left leg over his right, then vice versa, shifting uncomfortably against itchy green pillows.

"That is confidential." Chilton rest his head on his fist. "I can't share what he tells me in these sessions just as I can't share what you tell me."

Will sighed and crossed his arms. *It was worth a try.* He already hated it at the BSH, though it hadn't even been 24 hours since he had arrived. "When can I go home?"

Chilton smiled tightly. "When you are better you will be allowed to go home. We don't know when that will be."

Will averted his eyes from the doctor, choosing instead to observe the surroundings that were Chilton's office. It was almost completely white, save for the colorful wall of books slotted in the shelves behind a large marble desk. Chilton sat behind that desk, looking almost as clueless as usual, with an all- too -familiar look of wonder on his face.

"Do you often avoid eye contact, Will?"

Oh. *That question.* Will hummed, scrunched his nose, and found a copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in the bookshelf to focus on. “Eyes are distracting.” his hands felt over a loose thread in the couch. “You see too much, you don’t see enough. And-And it’s hard to focus when you’re thinking ‘ *Oh those whites are really white’* or ‘ *He must have hepatitis’* or-”

Chilton raised his hand, a signal for Will to *stop.* This wasn’t the first time Will had been stopped mid sentence, mid explanation because he had started to *over explain.* It was a hard habit to kick, something a part of him always itching to explain himself, to show that he was *not the crazy one;* and that once he got enough words out maybe he’d finally be understood.

He *never* was understood.

Chilton was speaking, though he was speaking too loudly for Will to want to listen. Will thought about shutting his eyes for a while, maybe enough to float away into his own mind, like a leaf fallen into a stream. He imagined the warmth of the sun on his cheeks, the cool heavy sounds of water rushing in between his limbs, and the soft air blowing past his hair. Chiltons sandpaper-like voice nowhere to be found in this place, his *sanctuary,* just him and the fish.

When he opened his eyes again, he was no longer in the marble office and found himself to be back in his room. He didn't remember how he had gotten there, or even falling asleep, though it was now dark outside. He turned over in his bed, hand reaching across the cool sheets in an attempt to fight the coating of sweat that had found its way across his body.

That's when he noticed Hannibal laying in his own bed, but not sleeping. The soft sound of pencil scratching paper made Will smile and he raised his head.

“What are you drawing?”

Hannibal looked at him, startled slightly by the sudden broken silence. “Judith beheading Holofernes.” a look of fondness gracing his features. “From what I can remember at least. It’s been a long time since it last graced my presence..It used to hang in my fathers study.”

Will made his way to Hannibal’s side of the room, politely sitting on the edge of his bed. “May I see?”

Hannibal gently set his pencil down and handed his sketchpad to Will. Their fingers brushed, and Will licked his dry lips, eyes glazing over the yellowed paper.

“Wow, Hannibal. This is amazing. Holy shit.” The drawing could have been the original, for all that Will knew about art. It looked to be something ripped from a history textbook, the strokes so technical but also *filled* to the brim with emotion. The image was obviously supposed to invoke a shocking, brutal reaction but instead instilled something else- a feeling of divine purpose, as if Will himself were a god looking upon his creations' beauty.

A nurse walked in then, breaking Will’s art filled trance with a flashlight in one hand and a clipboard in the other. “Go to bed you two.” she whispered deftly, her shoes click clacking against the tile below her as she walked away.

Hannibal's fangs made their welcomed appearance as he smiled. “Oh yes. I forgot to tell you that they do that often. They call them ‘checks.’ just to be sure none of us have hurt ourselves or ran away.”

Will’s mouth ran dry then as he hummed, slightly annoyed by the lack of privacy that they had.

He gently set Hannibal's sketchbook down on the bed and Instead of following the nurse's signal to retire and go to sleep, he crossed his legs and scooted further onto Hannibal’s mattress. They were practically shoulder to shoulder now, the warmth of Hannibal’s arm soaking its way into Will’s nightshirt.

“Has anyone ever escaped from here?”

Hannibal thumbed his sketchpad and placed it back onto his dresser. “Yes.” he paused, looking to be calculating something in his head. “I have.”

Will had to stop himself from looking surprised and he swallowed. “You-? You have? How did they catch you? Why are you here?”

“I am here of my own accord, Will. They didn’t catch me, I walked back in.”

Will looked at him with the most perplexed look as possible, and Hannibal continued. ”I escaped like most wanted to when they first arrived, I ran to the edge of town in a broken straightjacket. I was in nearly knee deep snow when it dawned on me that I had nowhere else to be. Both of my parents are dead, My aunt doesn’t want anything to do with me, and well. The boy's home had worse conditions than this place. I can draw here. Talk to good Doctor Chilton.” Hannibal's voice lifted, the surprising twinge of sarcasm escaping his tongue.

The familiar feeling of guilt burrowed into Will’s abdomen. Oh. Hannibal was an orphan. “I’m sorry.”

Hannibal huffed slightly, the reflection of a smile dawning his features and shook his head. “What for? You certainly didn’t kill them.”

“Yeah, but I mean. I was being insensitive.”

“And it’s refreshing.” Hannibal clicked his tongue. “Quite honestly I am tired of the pity.”

Will felt a warm fondness spreading throughout his chest. It was nice, for once, to have someone in his life who wanted to be his friend. Hannibal was kind, understanding, and so *goddamn talented* . It was shocking, because in reality someone like that wouldn't want anything to do with Will. Someone like that would have scoffed and run away at the simple notion of friendship.

"Have you always been like this?" Will blurted out.

"Like what, Will?"

"Kind. Considerate. I don't know. Nice."

Hannibal shrugged, A weird sight to see-such a distinguished, classy boy shrugging. "I don't think people have been kind enough to you."

He wasn't wrong, Will agreed that he hasn't been treated well throughout his life. But he felt that he had given them reason. Certainly given himself reason enough to hate himself. "I'm a mess. I think people have plenty of reasons to not want anything to do with me."

"Nonsense." Hannibal's hand rested around Will's shoulder, his thumb gentle as he brushed the side of Will's arm. " *You're intelligent.* Intelligence scares people. Don't let people bring you down because you are the smartest one in the room."

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The Beautiful Ones

Will awoke the next day in Hannibal's bed. They had talked well into the early hours of the morning, and must've fallen asleep. Embarrassment with a twinge of *something else* barreled deep into his skull as he looked at the back of Hannibal's head. Golden brown, soft locks of hair caressed the stale hospital pillow and Will felt the need to escape but also the need to stay.

The first feeling trumped the other at the thought of *Hannibal* knowing Will had fallen asleep in his bed. So, he carefully draped his cold toes off of the warm mattress and attempted to sneak across the room without him noticing.

Will stopped halfway, gritting his teeth. He looked back and a small sigh of relief expelled from his lips when he saw that Hannibal was still turned away from him, breathing even and body relaxed.

Will sneakily swiped Hannibal's sketchpad from his drawer, eager to look at more of his roommate's tastefully done drawings.

Once safely back on his own mattress, he hastily flipped open the book to the first page. Beautiful sketches of a young girl, who looked not older than four, graced the soft page. Words melted their way into Will's view as he looked to the bottom of the page, " *Mischa"* written In fancy script.

"Mischa" Will whispered, careful to not wake Hannibal but to also test the name in his mouth.

Curiosity got the better of him as he turned to the next page. Funny drawings of Chilton were scratched on this one, a couple nearing that of a caricature than a portrait. Will stifled his laugh and turned more pages, the next ones not as interesting as the previous. Technical things, like a chair or building.

He was about to close the book, but one drawing caught his eye immediately.

The one Hannibal did of him the day before.

Now, Will never thought himself even in the ballpark of what people consider “beautiful.” He honestly thought that he was on the *uglier, boyish* side of things. But this…

This was *beautiful.*

Will smiled fondly as he looked at the graphite, how Hannibal had drawn his curls to look soft as opposed to the reality of the scraggly mop that was currently attached to Will’s skull.

He turned the page and there was another of him.

And *another.*

… *and another.*

Hannibal had drawn him *four* times in the span of less than 24 hours.

Will stared at the paper for a moment, quickly shut the sketchpad and placed it back into Hannibal’s dresser.

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<u>The Beautiful Ones</u>

Breakfast was not good. It looked to be a pile of gray looking applesauce, with a side of mystery meat that honestly could be used as a hockey puck. Will ate a spoonful of the matter and immediately spat it out. It tasted like rot, similar to the way that Will’s insides had felt the day previous. Done. over with. Mushy.

Hannibal didn’t even look at the tray that was given to him, instead opting to gnaw on an apple and read George Orwell’s *1984* . Will couldn’t help but stare at his roommate, because he had never met someone so goddamn mysterious but also someone who had drawn him *four times.*

Goddammit, four times. Wasn’t one time enough? Why?

Hannibal noticed Will staring, causing an awkward 2 second standoff of *who's going to look away first.* Will lost of course, never being able to lock eyes with anyone let alone Hannibal for more than a couple of seconds.

Maybe Will was overthinking things. Maybe a new face was fascinating for Hannibal to draw. Maybe that’s all he was doing, practicing. Being an artist.

Hypothetically, this makes sense. Will knows it makes sense because he would have believed it. Of course an artist is going to draw new faces. But something about the way Hannibal was, made Will think that it was something else.

“Will?”

Trance broken. “Hm?”

“I can’t help but notice that you are acting a bit odd.”

“Oh” Will swallowed. “It’s nothing.”

"Hardly nothing." Hannibal marked his place in his book and set it down.

“My father called me this morning.” The words tumbled out of Will’s mouth. This wasn’t necessarily a lie, because he *had* called his father this morning (though it was not, in fact, the thing that was currently bothering him.)

And the call did suck.

“Will!” His fathers weirdly cheerful voice had boomed from the phone and Will scrunched his nose at how unusually *happy* he sounded. Will blinked and his frown grew with realization. Of course he was happy. He was gone.

“Dad.”

A pause on the other end. He was probably sipping coffee. “How are things?”

“Fucked up.” Will let the anger blow out through his teeth. “Shitty. Horrible. Bad. Unlivable.”

“Come on, son..”

“Don’t. ” Will adjusted the blue toned phone against his ear. “Don’t act like you just sent me to kindergarten. You sent me to a goddamn mental facility on my 16th birthday. How else am I supposed to react?! With *thanks?* Oh thank god you sent me away dad! Because I would have fucking offed myself if it weren’t for your *special* help!” Will seethed, careful to not raise his voice too much, a watchful orderlie’s eye two feet away from him. It was hard to not slam the phone down, to not scream and yell at his father on the other end. He was so mad. So mad at this shitty world, shitty father, shitty hospital, shitty food, *shit, shit, shit. It was all a load of shit.*

His dad swallowed. “I didn’t *want* to send you away.”

This made Will audibly laugh. “Like hell you didn’t want to! Ever since mom left you look for every opportunity to get rid of me. And you finally found it! *Congratu-fucking-lations!!* ”

“You’ll understand someday why I got you help.”

That. That right there. His dad always said that. *You’ll understand someday,* but that wasn’t true. It wasn’t because he understood ***now*** why his dad did the things he did. He still hated him. And you can’t take care of a child and simultaneously hate them. It simply can’t work that way. So away Will Graham went, and away his dad went to happy hour.

“Fuck off.” Will succumbed to the urge to slam the phone down and stepped away from the booth.

Hannibal blinked and looked at Will. “Sounds like your dad is afraid of confrontation.”

Will sighed and combed his hands through his hair. “He’s afraid of a lot of things, Hannibal.” He chewed on his bottom lip. "God, I can't wait to just get out of this place and do what I want. Without him making decisions for me. He's never cared before, I don't know why all of a sudden he cares so much."

Hannibal hummed softly, wearing a slight unsure look on his face as he paused for a moment, twisting a pencil in his hands. “Certainly it is selfish of me to be glad that you are here.”

Hannibal's demeanor was gentle, and Will felt his chest tighten. *Dammit.* "That's not selfish." He smiled hesitantly. He had not considered this. If he were to leave, he would probably never see Hannibal again. His only friend. "I'm glad you're here too. Guess that makes us both selfish."

Hannibal laughed, something so sudden but so beautiful. "Very, very selfish."

Chapter End Notes

Finally updating this one! I know I said I would be updating every week, but I think more realistically I'll update every other week/ when I can. <3

Doctor

Chapter Summary

> “Where are we going?” Will looked at the back of Hannibal’s head, the soft hairs bouncing with every step down.
>
> Hannibal sniffed. “You’ll see.” He looked behind himself and at Will, producing an award winning vampire-esque smile. “I think you will like it.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will sat in the gray-blue bathtub and grimaced at the hotness of the water. The nearly volcanic temperature was something that the hospital staff deemed necessary for treatment, apparently. *Hydrotherapy* is what Chilton called this, *The cleansing of germs and illness from the outside of the body, to alleviate stress from within.*

Quite frankly, Will believed that to be absolute *horseshit.* It’s one thing to take a relaxing bath at home that is of a controllable, *normal* temperature- but to be sitting in a body of practically boiling hot water with the company of what felt like everyone in Baltimore..was on a whole other fucking level.

A boy screamed from a few feet away, words spewing from his mouth as he did everything to *not* touch the water he was being placed in. His movement was reminiscent that of a cat’s, the frantic pawing at the edges of the tub and the constant yelling with the slight undertone of what Will could only describe as a *hiss.*

There was a tan cheesecloth-like covering overtop all of these tubs, to keep the overwhelming heat in, and Will squirmed under it. He understood the boy’s reluctance, and even more so understood when he noticed the crater-like cigar burns decorating his legs and arms.

The orderly finally managed to plunge him into the water, and he let out a yelp. The boy shook as the cloth was placed and secured above him.

With that, the familiar clacking of Chilton’s cane entered Will’s ear and he rolled his eyes. There was a sound of a stool being dragged across wet flooring, and then a soft plop of fabric as he sat down.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Graham.”

Will sighed. “Doctor.”

"How are you liking your stay here?"

Will stared at his skewed reflection in the fossett, trying his best not to roll his eyes further back into his head."I hate it."

Chilton frowned and rested one leg over the other, Will looked at him and noticed the effort that the doctor made to not completely cross his leg over his knee. "Any way I can help you enjoy it more?"

The boy was crying now. Silently, but Will could hear the soft sniffles that echoed against the tile–he could have been practically screaming, for how loud his cries bounced around in Will's skull.

He pictured the boy's family. Friends. Things tarnished and ruined by the simple fact that he couldn't find it in himself to just be *happy* . The regret he must feel, not for being the way he was, but for not being capable enough to just-

Chilton let out an annoyed sigh at Will's silence. "I've noticed that you and Hannibal Lecter have gotten along swimmingly."

"Hm? Yes, Hannibal is nice.." Will stayed far away and stared at the boy. "Can you take him out?"

"What?"

"Him." Will tilted his head over to the cat-boy. "He's in pain."

The boy let out one more sob before passing out, his head slipping under the cloth and into the water, the covering following soon after- The sounds of liquid being breathed in and gurgled exploded and popped in Will's ears, so loudly that he couldn't help but scream and thrash from under his own cloth.

"Who's in pain?"

Will blinked and looked at the Doctor with disbelief. "The boy! He's Drowning!"

Chilton looked around the room, then back to Will. "I see no boy?"

Will frantically looked back to the tub and the boy was *gone. Impossibly gone.* The bath could have been in the middle of a desert-type of gone. "What?" He let out a distressed huff. "There—He was *right* there!"

Chilton looked at him curiously, taking a beat of what seemed like almost never ending silence.

"Do you often see things, Will?" Chilton asked this in a familiar tone, one that annoyed Will quite a bit, the tone that most doctors used when trying to diagnose him, or study him. As if he were an *animal in a zoo.*

Will furrowed his brow and frowned. " *No.* I'm not crazy! I know what I saw-I" He swallowed, the dryness of his throat causing him to nearly choke on his spit and cough.

Chilton whispered to an orderly, sounding overly concerned. The orderly nodded and lifted Will from the tub by his shoulders. He struggled from under the man's grip, stark naked, wet feet slipping against the slick floor.

"What are you doing?? Let me go!" Will flipped and punched him, blood immediately staining the all white hospital outfit.

As if out of nowhere, four more orderlies appeared and forced Will to the ground. His face was smashed against the tile and his hands were forced behind his back.

***

The Beautiful Ones

Will was sent to the Pillow room, and dressed in a straitjacket. Most likely because he punched an orderly, which in hindsight, wasn't his smartest move. It did feel fucking amazing to finally punch one of Chilton's minions, though.

The worst part about being sent to *the pillow room* wasn't necessarily the extreme boredom or lackluster surroundings. It was the perpetual, unrelenting light. It was so bright, that Will felt as if he could barely open his eyes. Day in, day out, hot light shone through the fragile glass bulbs, ones so shockingly vivid, that it felt as if he were staring at a blanket of snow doused in radiation.

Will tried his best at blocking the light out, first pressing his face against the floor, then opting to curl his entire body into a ball against the corner, just to get even any semblance of darkness.

And this was exactly what he had been doing, when the sound of paper being slid across padded flooring entered his ears. Will raised his head and noticed the note, written in ridiculously ornate cursive lettering.

BE QUIET.

Will frowned at this, both out of confusion and distaste for being told to essentially, *shut up.* He was about to speak, to tell them to *fuck off, I can do whatever I want to!* Until the door opened with a click, revealing Hannibal Lecter on the other side with a finger to his lips. He smiled once he saw Will, the curve of his mouth being hidden by his fist.

Will opened his jaw but Hannibal quickly smacked his hand to it.

" *The guard is sleeping.* " He whispered and moved his hand from Will's mouth to the buckles on the jacket. He tugged the leather straps heavily, his fingers moving in passive motions over the loops and belts. One buckle got stuck as Hannibal pulled on it, the force sending Will falling into Hannibal's shoulder, resting his face in the curve of his neck.

Hannibal stilled for half a second, almost as if he had forgotten what he had been doing, until he pressed his hand to the back of Will's neck reassuringly before continuing to fiddle with the buckles.

The sounds of this was vaguely evocative to the sound of undoing a belt, which sent Wills thoughts spiraling into a whole other direction entirely. He wondered if Hannibal could hear his heartbeat this close. If he smelled funny. If his hair looked as wiry as he last remembered it.

His cheeks flushed when Hannibal reached behind him to untie the last loop. Their chests were pressed tightly against each other, and Will couldn't help but uncomfortably shift against him as he stared at the soft nape of Hannibal's neck.

***

The Beautiful Ones

They tiptoed down the halls, the soft pattering of feet against cold flooring echoing throughout the building. The hospital was different at night, more peaceful, with most patients asleep. Moonlight shined brightly through the wide windows, reflecting off Hannibal's hair every so often as they slowly made their way across the hallway.

Hannibal squatted near a door, the jingling of keys nearly scaring Will half to death. He picked one out of the ring and slid it into the keyhole, a click sounding as Will's body filled with relief.

Hannibal closed the door behind them, standing up confidently, placing one foot on the staircase ahead of them. "We'll be safe here. They never go past this area if they can't help it."

This stairway definitely showed how old the building actually was. It was red brick in contrast to the white outside, dusty and covered in cobwebs. Dust fell off the walls with every step that they took.

"Where are we going?" Will looked at the back of Hannibal's head, the soft hairs bouncing with every step down.

Hannibal sniffed. "You'll see." He looked behind himself and at Will, producing an award winning vampire-esque smile. "I think you will like it."

"We'll see about that, Lecter." Will quipped and took the last step down, following Hannibal into the dark corridor. He turned swiftly, moving as if he were a trained dancer– elegant but strong.

"We are here. I took the liberty of lighting the candles beforehand. A shame for the building's seniority, for maybe we could have better light. Though the rustic look of it all really makes one feel like gothic royalty."

It was nothing short of phenomenal. The room must have been an old library, the walls lined with hundreds-if not thousands of books. Ones that had been left there, seemingly to rot, the cobwebs indicating that they had not been touched in a very long time.

Will hadn't noticed that his mouth had been agape, until Hannibal spoke again.

“I think it’d be good to assume that you like it?”

Will shut his mouth and nodded, cooly adding. “Yeah. I like it. Holy shit I like it.” He looked around him, moving towards the bookshelf, removing a book that hadn’t had as much dust on it as the others. He flipped through it, noting some pages that were bookmarked.

“Human Anatomy.” Hannibal came around to him and pressed his hand on the book, his fingers brushing Will’s. “I’ve found that I have a passion for it.” He turned the page to a drawing of a man being stabbed many times via different tools. “I would like to eventually become a surgeon, though current circumstances really don’t show that dream easily coming into fruition.”

Will looked back at him. “Doctor Lecter.” he huffed softly, half laughing. “Sounds good. Natural. I think you were born to become one.”

Hannibal smiled. “You think so?”

Will closed the book. “I know so.”

Chapter End Notes

hey! long time no see! I have had the first part of this chapter written for so long, I hadn't been sure where to take this AU. I've been pretty occupied as of late, I'm an artist and I recently had an exhibit open. I finished that so woo! more gay writing!

I'll try and be more consistent <3

End Notes

I will try and consistently update this one it was so fun to write! <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!